

DANGER. SAFETY. GRATITUDE. NO. 3074

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“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Jude 1:24-25

[Other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are # 634, Christians Kept in Time and Glorified in Eternity, and #2296, Saints Guarded from Stumbling.]

WE may derive much evil or much good from the falls of others. We may derive much evil from their falls if we follow their bad example, or if our pride suggests to us that we are better than they are. It is an evil thing for a man to look upon his fallen brother, and then to say, in the spirit of the Pharisee, “God, I thank thee that I am not such a sinner as that man is.” This kind of spirit would make it very probable that we should yet become even worse than the poor fallen one.

But on the other hand, much good may come to us through the falls of others if the moment we see or hear of the falling of our brethren, we reflect that we should have done the same if we had not been upheld by God—that all the evil that has come out of them might also have come out of us, for it is in every one of us by nature. Unless God’s restraining hand shall prevent its being displayed, it will be displayed in our life as well as in theirs.

Every wreck ought to be a beacon. One man’s fall should be another’s warning. Do you see your brother’s foot trip against a stone? Then, take care how you go along that way. Do you see him yield to temptation? Then, mind that your ears are closed against that which fascinated him, and turned him aside from the right path. Wherein you see that he failed in anything, set a double guard upon yourself just there, and ask God to give you grace to keep you with special keeping in that particular point which was his weakness, and which may, unknown to yourself, be also your own.

I am led to make these remarks because the Epistle of Jude describes certain gross offenders, the apostle says a good deal about persons who were in the church, but were evidently not of it, and who, therefore, were the church’s weakness and dishonor, spots in her solemn feasts, clouds without water, trees without fruit, “raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.”

Now, if the reflection from that description should be, in the case of any of us, “We are superior persons to them, and are not at all likely to fall into such a condition as this,” the consideration of their condition would have had a very unhappy influence upon ourselves. But if we use this Epistle in the right way, as Jude means us to do, and begin to look at our own weakness, and to dread our own failure, and then close all, as he does, with a doxology to Him who is able to keep us from falling where others have fallen, and to present us faultless when others will be condemned, and to bring us to exceeding joy while they will be banished to the place where they will have to endure exceeding misery, surely we ought to give honor, and praise, and glory “to the only wise God our Savior,” and this will be a blessed way of extracting good out of the failings and falls of others.

This is my objective in speaking to you upon this text, and I am going to talk to you very simply upon three things—firstly, *our danger*, secondly, *our safety*, and thirdly, *our gratitude*.

I. The first thing we are to consider is OUR DANGER.

We are in danger of falling—not only some of us, but all of us; not merely the weak, but also the strong; not the young alone, but the old and the middle-aged, all are in danger of falling into sin, and so bringing dishonor upon our profession, sorrow to our souls, and disgrace upon the name of Christ, whom we profess to love and serve.

That, we are in danger should strike us very clearly *because we have seen others fall into sin*. I scarcely dare to recall all that I have seen during my observation of the professing church of Christ. Though I think I have been peculiarly favored as a pastor, there are sore places in my soul—bleeding wounds that will never be healed this side of heaven, that have been caused by the backsliding of men with whom I took sweet counsel, and in whose company I used to walk to the house of God. I have known some, who have preached the Gospel, and preached it with power, live to depart from it altogether.

I have known others, who have served at the Lord's table, who have discharged the duties of the deaconship or the eldership with considerable diligence, who have afterwards given way to their evil passions. I have thought some of them to be among the holiest of men. While they have been praying, I have been lifted up in devotion to the very gates of heaven, and if anyone had said to me that they would one day fall into gross sin, I could not have believed it. I would sooner have believed it to be possible of myself.

When I have heard of their fall, it has struck me with a sharp pang, and when it has been my sad duty to inquire into the matter, and I have been compelled to be convinced of the truthfulness of the accusation brought against them, I have been staggered to think how far a man may go in profession, and yet not possess the grace of God in truth, and how like a Christian a man may be, and yet not really be a child of God, and how he may have many resemblances to the grace of God, and yet may not have that grace in his soul indeed and of a truth. "Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen," is a cry that may still be heard.

Those who seemed stronger than we are have fallen, so why may not we? Nay, shall we not fall unless sovereign grace shall prevent that dread calamity? Our Lord's disciples, who sat at the table with Him, when they were told that one of them would betray their Master, each one inquired, "Lord, is it I?" That was a very proper question. There was not one who asked, "Lord, is it Judas?" Probably no one of them even suspected him, and it may be that the worst hypocrite in this assembly is the one upon whom there does not rest at this moment a single shade of suspicion. He has learned to play his part so well that his true character has not yet been discovered.

One of these days, the thirty pieces of silver will prove too attractive to him, and then he will sell his Master. Will that traitor be yourself, dear friend, or will it be myself? Surely, if this has been the case with others, it must be a matter for our own serious consideration, seeing that we also are as liable to be tempted as they were, and as liable to yield to the temptation. John Newton was right when he wrote—

*"When any turn from Zion's way,
(Alas, what numbers do!)
I think I hear my Savior say,
'Wilt thou forsake Me too?'*

*Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,
Unless Thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like they at last."*

Besides that, not only have others fallen, but *we ourselves, although in a great measure kept by divine grace, have not been faultless*. If all men knew all about us that might be known, we should hardly be able to look them in the face. Someone is said to have once wished that he had a window in his heart, so that everybody could look in and see all that was there. But if he had such a window, he

would want to have blinds to it, and he would probably keep them down for the most part, for who would like his neighbor to read the thoughts of his heart even for a single hour?

Have there not been times with you, my brethren, honorable men, Christians of good standing in the church, when your feet had almost gone, your steps had well-nigh slipped, and sisters in Christ, preserved as you have been in the faith of Jesus, and enabled to honorably maintain your Christian character, have there not been times when temptation has been very strong upon you, and when you have half consented to the sin that has been suggested to you? I know, if you are flesh and blood like the rest of us, you must confess that it has been so with you.

So, then, we have this double warning—what we have seen in others, and what we have felt in ourselves. Besides, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, ought we not to realize the danger of our falling when we consider *the world we live in, and the flesh we live in, and the tempter who is continually tempting us?* The road we have to tread is often so slippery that we have need not only to watch our feet, but also to pray, “O Lord, hold me up, and I shall be safe.”

There are also many who watch for our halting, and some who do more than that, for they set traps for us, and if they could but catch us in them, how rejoiced they would be! If we do not fall, it is not because they have not tried to make us fall, but because God has upheld us by His grace. If we know ourselves at all, we must have come to the conclusion that, apart from the grace of God, we are a mass of sin and corruption, and capable of anything that is evil.

I do not wonder that John Bradford said, as he saw men taken to be hanged at Tyburn, “There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God.” There is powder enough in all our hearts to blow our character to pieces if God does not keep the devil’s sparks away, or quench them in a mighty stream of grace before they can do us mischief. Utter weakness are you, O man, and many and mighty foes are seeking your destruction, you need an infinite Friend to keep you in safety against all the machinations of your adversaries!

We constantly need to cry to God to keep us from falling, remembering what a dreadful thing it would be for us to fall. We know that a true child of God cannot fall fatally or finally, but we also know that some, who profess to be the people of God, do fall foully, fatally, and finally, and that others who are really the people of God, have fallen to their own great grief, and to their Lord’s dishonor.

O my dear sister, what sorrow there would be in the hearts of those who know you if you were to turn aside, and how the enemy would blaspheme, and how would those who are weak in the faith be staggered if you were to be permitted to disgrace your Christian profession!

And my dear brother, you who are of venerable years, looked up to and respected by many, what grief would fill your own heart—when the Lord brought you to penitence for your guilt—if you were allowed to fall into sin, and meanwhile, how much mischief you would have done to the church of God, and to souls seeking the Savior! Pray very specially for those of us who stand in prominent positions, for it is not easy to keep a clear head when one is upon the top of a pinnacle, but when you have prayed for us, pray also for yourselves. God can keep men in safety on the tops of pinnacles if He puts them there, but the men in the valley will fall if they think they can keep themselves securely.

I remember talking once to a lady who assured me again and again that she prayed daily for me that I might be kept humble. I told her that I should pray the same prayer for her, and when she said, “Oh, I am never tempted to be proud,” I replied, “Well, dear friend, I am afraid you are very far gone in that direction already, or else you would not talk as you do.” We can easily perceive the danger in which others are, and if we do, we ought to pray for them, but let us not forget our own peril, for the greatest danger does not lie in the position we are called to occupy, but in our relying upon our own strength, and not upon our God—

*“Lord, through the desert drear and wide,
Our erring footsteps need a guide;
Keep us, oh keep us near Thy side.
Let us not fall. Let us not fall.*

*We have no fear that Thou shouldst lose
One whom eternal love could choose;
But we would ne'er this grace abuse.
Let us not fall. Let us not fall.*

*Lord, we are blind, and halt, and lame,
We have no stronghold but Thy name:
Great is our fear to bring it shame.
Let us not fall. Let us not fall.*

*Lord, evermore Thy face we seek:
Tempted we are, and poor, and weak;
Keep us with lowly hearts, and meek.
Let us not fall. Let us not fall.*

*All Thy good work in us complete,
And seat us daily at Thy feet;
Thy love, Thy words, Thy name, how sweet!
Let us not fall. Let us not fall."*

There are dangers that are peculiar to every position. To those who live a very quiet life, there is the danger of the rust and the moth, and to those who live an active life, there is the danger of being cumbered with much service. You who are young are certainly in danger from impetuous companions, and yet it is remarkable that amongst the offenders, even against morality, mentioned in Scripture, we do not read of many who were young.

David falls not into such foul sin until he is advanced in years, as if to show us that it is not age that gives strength to resist evil. Age brings experience, but unless grace comes with the experience, it gets to be like the manna in the wilderness, which bred worms and stank when men tried to feed upon it after its proper time. We are all safe while we are in God's hands, but we are none of us safe in our own keeping, and every position that we may occupy has its own peculiar perils.

Do not be in haste to get away from a position in which you are tempted, for you will be tempted in every position, and possibly, the temptation which assails you in your present circumstances may be less powerful for evil than the one to which you would be exposed if you were to change your place.

Many a man of God has leaped out of the frying pan into the fire. I have even known some who have thought that they were going to get into a port where they would never again suffer from storms, and they have gone out of their proper course in order to get into that port, and there the most dreadful hurricane they ever knew has come upon them.

Be ever afraid of not being afraid, and be always in fear when you feel that you are perfectly safe. When you realize your danger, and fly to the Lord to guard you, then you are safe. But when you begin to think, "All is right with me, nothing will make me fall now," you are not very far off a bad fall in which you may suffer serious hurt. May God keep you, my dear brothers and sisters, may He preserve each one of us till we see His face in glory at the last!

Did you notice that the text indicates what a joy it will be to be kept from falling? Jude says, "Christ is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory *with exceeding joy.*" It will indeed be exceeding joy to be kept from falling, and to be presented faultless at the end.

I have often prayed that I might be able to say what George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, said just before he died, his words were these, "I am clear. I am clear. I am clear." He felt that he had faithfully discharged his ministry and spoken all that the Spirit of God had taught him, and if I may say what he did—that I am clear of the blood of all men when I lay down my body and my charge—I will not ask anything more.

And if each professing Christian here shall be clear at the last, and be able to say, with Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,” you will have exceeding joy. I do not think so much of the harps of gold and the streets that shine with dazzling splendor, and the other descriptions of the glories of heaven, as of this—

***“May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all!”***

May I get where I shall never again sin, and where I shall not even be tempted to sin! May I get where flesh and sense shall no more destroy the sacred pleasures of my soul! It will be exceeding joy, even to dancing and leaping of spirit, as the Greek has it, if we may but be presented faultless at the last, having been kept by sovereign grace even to the end.

This must suffice concerning our danger.

II. Now secondly, I am to speak upon OUR SAFETY, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling...to the only wise God our Saviour.”

Our safety lies in our Savior—“God our Saviour.” Just think of that great truth for a moment. When we first came to Christ, we rejoiced that He was a Savior—a sinner’s Savior. All our hope and comfort lay in the fact that God had appointed Him to be our Savior. Well now, beloved, in looking forward to the temptations that will assail you in your future life, keep your eye on your Savior. You did not have Him to be a Savior for a time, to cleanse you from sin, and then to leave you to fall back into sin.

When you took Him to be your Savior, I hope you took Him for all your life, and for eternity. That is how He took you, He espoused you unto Himself in an everlasting wedlock, and therefore, He would have you depend as much upon Him for sanctification as for justification, rely as much upon Him to keep you from sin as to keep you from hell, and trust as much to Him to enable you to overcome your present temptation as you trusted to Him at the first to overcome your fear of condemnation.

Christ is your Savior from beginning to end, so always regard Him in that light, and as your Savior let it be very comforting to you to reflect that He is divine, “The only wise *God* our Saviour.” He who has undertaken to save you is no mere man and no angel, He is nothing less than the omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient God. Your peril can be averted by His omnipotent might. The hidden dangers in your pathway all lie unveiled to His all-seeing eye. You are safe, not because you can see and avoid the dangers that beset you, nor yet because you are strong, and can conquer your adversaries, but because your Savior is God, and therefore you shall be saved, continuously saved, perfectly saved, and presented as a saved one at the last.

Observe how Jude puts this precious truth, “Unto him that *is able* to keep you from falling.” Why does the apostle lay such stress upon the ability of Christ? You know that our faith sometimes fails us concerning Christ’s ability and sometimes concerning His willingness to save us. One came to Christ and said, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,” and another said to him “If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.”

Now, in this matter to which Jude is referring, I suppose that we should not have had any doubt about God’s willingness, because it must be the will of the thrice-holy God to keep His people from falling, if any question did arise, it would be concerning God’s power, and not concerning His willingness.

And here let me remark that this is a very wonderful power. The power to create a world, the power to divide the rocks, the power to shake the mountains or set them on a blaze, is a very inferior power compared with that which is able to keep us from falling, because God has been pleased to make us free agents, and He never deprives us of our free agency. Yet, without the destruction of a quality which is necessary to our responsible manhood, God is nevertheless able to keep us from falling.

Of course, He could keep us from falling into certain sins by shutting us up in a prison, or by depriving us in some other way of the power to commit those sins. But He does not keep us in that way.

He leaves us as free agents, with every faculty and propensity that we had before, yet, by some mysterious, omnipotent working of His Holy Spirit, which we can no more understand than we can the blowing of the wind, He does keep His people from falling.

If He turned them at once into angels, so that they never had a desire to sin again, that would be a simple process, but He lets them remain men, and as I know from my own experience, men with the same passions as before, and with the same possibilities of sinning as before, and yet, by a divine working which is nothing less than a continuous miracle, He keeps them from falling again into the sins in which they once indulged, and every one who knows by experience the power of God to keep a child of His from falling, must and will magnify the name of the Lord, even as Jude does in this doxology.

Observe too, that the apostle puts God's wisdom side by side with His ability, "to the only wise God our Saviour." You know that it needs great wisdom in a parent to keep his child from evil, but it needs far greater wisdom for God to keep men and women, whom He treats as men and women, and not as logs, or bricks, or stones, from falling into sin.

And oh, what divine wisdom there is in the dispositions of providence, and in the manifold workings of the Holy Spirit, in using saints to protect saints, and even in using sinners to warn saints, in using holy pleasures to allure saints to good, and using evils to drive saints from evil! What you and I owe to God's rod we shall never know till we get to heaven, the love there is in every twig of it, and in every smart and bruise that it makes, we shall never fully estimate until our faculties are enlarged beyond the narrow bounds of this finite state.

It is the tender mercy of God that keeps some of you poor, and makes others of you so frequently depressed in spirit. It is God's loving-kindness which prevents you from prospering in your endeavors, and which makes you cry out in the bitterness of your spirit, "All these things are against me." God wounds us that He may heal us, He kills us that He may quicken us, He lays us low, and digs out our very foundations, that He may build us up to be fair temples in which He may abide forever.

So, our safety is assured by the fact that we have a God who is able and is as wise as He is able to keep us from falling.

And then we have something more than mere safety, for the text adds, "*and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*" We have this word "present" several times in the New Testament.

Paul wrote to the saints in Rome, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." He also wrote to the Christians in Corinth concerning his desire to present them "as a chaste virgin to Christ." To the Ephesians he wrote that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," and here Jude writes concerning Christ presenting His people "faultless before the presence of his glory"—not presenting them unfallen, but "*faultless.*"

I suppose there are some brethren, who have grown so familiar with the idea of their own perfection, that they can quite understand what it is to feel perfect, but I am so familiar with the sense of my own imperfections that it takes me a long while to grasp the fact that I shall one day be "without fault before the throne of God."

I can sit down, sometimes, with an aching head, and believe that it will wear a crown by and by. I can look at these hands, and believe that I shall one day wave a palm branch of victory. I can and do fully expect to wear the white robe, and to sing the everlasting song in glory. But it will be more than all this to be absolutely perfect with never a risk of a hasty temper rising, or the fear of men checking one's lips from saying what is right. There will be no undue haste, and at the same time, there will be no sloth, there will be no preponderance of any grace so as to cause it to grow into a fault, and no deficiency in any point of character.

To be faultless before men is a great thing. To be faultless before the devil, so that even he cannot find any fault in us, is greatly to be desired. But the most wonderful thing of all must be to be presented

by Christ “faultless before the presence of his glory.” That is, where the light is brightest, and no speck of sin is to be seen, the saints shall be so perfectly purified by the omnipotent grace of God the Holy Spirit that even the Lord Himself, in whose sight the heavens are not pure, and who charges His angels with folly, shall look upon His redeemed people, and declare that they are faultless, holy and unblameable and unreprovable in His sight.

Oh, blessed portion, glorious hope! This is something that is worth struggling for, so brethren and sisters in Christ, let us fight more valiantly than ever against our sins and corruptions. Armed with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, we shall win the day. He who is able to keep us from falling will not be satisfied with acting on the defensive for us, and protecting us from our enemies, but He will enable us to carry the war into the enemy’s country, and we shall be “more than conquerors through him that loved us,” and we shall have this resplendent character at last, that we shall be “without fault before the throne of God.” [See sermon #2324, The Followers of the Lamb].

III. The last thing upon which I have to speak is OUR GRATITUDE.

I must speak upon it briefly, but I hope you will think and act upon it at great length, yea, throughout your whole lives, and I shall do the same. The apostle says, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.”

So, then, the text winds up with the thought that *to God must be all the praise*. It is well to know on whose head we are to put the crown. If we could save ourselves, we might praise ourselves, but I trust that we are none of us so foolish as to imagine that we can do anything to save ourselves.

I have heard of a vessel that was once in a storm—not a very severe one—but a gentleman on board thought it was, and went about amongst the sailors and passengers finding fault with the captain’s management of the vessel, and saying that he was sure the ship would go to pieces, and that all on board would go to the bottom of the sea.

He did so much mischief by his foolish talking that, at last, the captain said to him, “We must rely upon every man doing his duty, will you go, and hold that rope over there?” He went at once, and there he stood like a martyr, and held on to the rope until the storm had abated, and then he began congratulating himself upon the eminent part that he had played in saving the ship in that terrible storm. When he got too proud, the captain said to him, “I only gave you that bit of rope to hold just to keep you quiet, your holding it was of no other use whatever.”

Then the gentleman saw what a fool he had been, and when a man thinks he has done something towards his own salvation, if he could only know the truth of the matter, he would soon see what a fool he is. He was a far more sensible man who said that he was saved because Christ did His part, and he did all the rest. Somebody asked him, “But what was ‘the rest’ that you did?” and he replied, “Why, Christ did it all, and I only stood in His way, and hindered Him all I could.”

That is about all that we shall ever do in the matter of our soul’s salvation. It must rest with Christ alone, and our wisdom is to commit ourselves to Him who is able to meet all the necessities of our case, and to conduct us safely to our journey’s end, but since, from the first to the last, salvation is of the Lord—

*“Then give all the glory to His holy name,
For to Him all the glory belongs.”*

Whenever you hear anybody praising some good minister whom God has blessed to him, join in his praises as one brother should do concerning another, but then add, “We have had enough of that strain, dear friend, so now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.” And if anybody should ever praise you for any spiritual help you may have given, always pass on the praise to Him that is able to keep you from falling, for He deserves it all. Give to Him, in the very highest degree that is possible, glory and majesty, dominion and power—the highest praise of which your thankful heart is capable, and the deepest devotion to which your grateful spirit can

attain. How much better we will praise God one day than we can ever do while we are in this body! Good old John Berridge, speaking of the saints above singing in heaven, says—

*"O happy saints, who dwell in light,
And walk with Jesus, clothed in white;
Safe landed on that peaceful shore,
Where pilgrims meet to part no more.*

*Released from sin, and toil, and grief,
Death was their gate to endless life;
An open'd cage to let them fly,
And build their happy nest on high.*

*And now they range the heavenly plains,
And sing their hymns in melting strains;
And now their souls begin to prove
The heights and depths of Jesus' love.*

*Ah, Lord! With tardy steps I creep,
And sometimes sing, and sometimes weep;
Yet strip me of this house of clay,
And I will sing as loud as they."*

And so it shall be with us, yet we shall always feel as if our loftiest praises could not rise to the height of His great love wherewith He has loved us. I remember saying in a sermon, one night, "When I get to heaven, I will sing more loudly than anybody else, for I shall owe the most to sovereign grace." At the close of the service, a good old sister said to me, "You made a mistake in your sermon tonight." "What was that?" I asked. "Why, you said that you would sing the loudest in heaven, but you will not, for I shall, for I shall owe more to grace than you will." I soon found that all the other Christians there were of the same opinion as that dear old soul, that each one of them would owe more to the grace of God than all the rest, and surely, that will be the only contention among the birds of paradise—which shall sing the most sweetly to the praise of their adorable Lord.

But the text seems to me to say that while we are to give God the praise, and to give Him only the praise, and to give Him the best praise that we can, *we are to give that praise to Him now*. Jude says, "Now and ever." What! are we to praise the Lord now for keeping us to the end? Will it not do if we praise Him when the end comes, and we have been kept to the end? Will it not do if we praise Him when we are presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy?

But can you not believe God's promise that He will keep you to the end, and bless His name for it even now? Many a time you have expressed your gratitude to a friend when he has said, "I will do so-and-so for you." You were sure that he would do what he said, his promise was enough for you, and as the Lord has promised to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, surely you can say—

*"And a 'new song' is in my mouth,
To long-loved music set,
Glory to Thee for all the grace
I have not tasted yet.*

*I have a heritage of joy,
That yet I must not see:*

*The hand that bled to make it mine,
Is keeping it for me.”*

Now I close by saying that *this praise is to be perpetual*, “both now and ever. Amen.” We may begin now, but we must always keep on, as long as we live, praising Him who is able to keep us from falling. What! keep on praising Him? Yes, even when the deep waters are all around you, still praise Him, and if they grow deeper yet, still praise Him. Let this be your soul’s resolve—

*“I’ll praise my Maker with my breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.”*

If I can send the children of God away from this service praising Him, good will have been done, but I wish that those who are not God’s people would feel a great longing after these good things. Some of you young people are just now starting in life, you have an excellent character, and you hope you may be enabled to preserve it to the end.

Let me just tell you of something that was a great help in bringing me to Christ. I knew a young man, a little older than myself, who was often held up to me as model, and he certainly was a model in many respects. But I saw him go wrong, sadly wrong, and then I thought within myself, “I may do just as he has done.” And when I heard it said that the Lord would keep His people right to the end—that Christ had said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,” I must confess that the doctrine of the final preservation of the saints was a bait that my soul could not resist. I thought it was a sort of life insurance—an insurance of my character, an insurance of my soul, an insurance of my eternal destiny.

I knew that I could not keep myself, but if Christ promised to keep me, then I would be safe forever, and I longed and prayed to find Christ because I knew that if I found Him, He would not give me a temporary and trumpery salvation, such as some preach, but eternal life which could never be lost, the living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever, for no one and nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Dear young people, do you not feel the same kind of drawing that I felt then? Do you not wish that you were Christ’s, that you might be kept through life honorable and consistent? May His gracious Spirit lead you to trust yourself to Jesus this very moment! Then you will be safe and saved forever. Ay, and you old people too, and all of you, whatever your age may be, rely upon Jesus, make Him your sole confidence, and then He will keep you to the end.

When my dear old grandfather was dying, one of my uncles said to him, “Dr. Watts said—

*“Firm as the earth Thy Gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust,”*—

but the aged saint said, “That won’t do for me now, ‘Firm as the earth.’ Why, the earth is slipping away from me. I want something firmer than the earth now. I like the doctor best, my boy, when he says—

*“Firm as His throne His promise stands,
And He can well secure
What I’ve committed to His hands,
Till the decisive hour.”*

“Sovereign grace,” said he, “is my trust now. God’s promise standing firm as God’s throne, and my faith linked to it. There is the safety of my spirit.” And so he passed away. It is a grand thing to feel that God’s throne might sooner fail than that a saint can perish, for His throne itself is established in righteousness, and He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness—faithful and just, not merely merciful and gracious, and His very faithfulness and justice require that He should keep the soul that has obeyed His will and committed itself to the Redeemer’s hands. May the Lord thus save us all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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